

**Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee**  
**Public Hearing Testimony**  
**By**  
**Interim President Philip E. Austin**  
**University of Connecticut**  
**And**  
**Cato T. Laurencin, M.D., Ph.D., Vice President and Dean**  
**University of Connecticut School of Medicine**  
**March 15, 2011**

Thank you for affording us the opportunity to submit written testimony on **SB 1152 AN ACT CONCERNING THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT HEALTH CENTER**. We also want to thank you for creating a bill that could be amended later in the legislative process to reflect any statutory changes needed to help the Health Center fulfill its mission of patient care, research, and medical education. This assumes, of course, that with your advice and input, along with the administration's, a consensus can be reached on how best to advance the Health Center so that we can maximize our contributions to the delivery of quality healthcare in Connecticut and advance the State's economic interests.

As you are aware, we reported to the committee in January, pursuant to Section 15 of Public Act 10-104, on the progress on the John Dempsey Hospital Construction and Renovation Project and the Establishment of the UConn Health Network. Attached is a copy of the January 19<sup>th</sup> letter, which still provides the most recent summary of the actions we have taken since the enactment of the Public Act. We are also providing for the Committee's review the Health Center's recent testimony and supporting materials that were shared last week with the Higher Education Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee.

It is critically important for the construction of the new hospital tower at John Dempsey Hospital to proceed in order to bring stability to our operations. Having a financially viable, on-site hospital staffed by first-rate clinician scientists and educators is an essential component to operating a successful academic health center. We need the hospital to attract top faculty clinician scientists, to conduct bench to bedside research and patient care and serve as a teaching site for our students and residents. Faculty need to be close to where they see patients, conduct their research and teach students. The hospital is a classroom and as such needs to be geographically proximate to the academic facilities.

Collectively, UCHC's activities contribute significantly to the State's economy. In addition to our clinical enterprise, our more than \$100 million in research grants serves as a catalyst for biomedical and biotech jobs. It is estimated that UCHC generates nearly \$1 billion in Gross State Product. And we're playing an increasing role in generating start-up businesses through our incubator space and state-of-the-art labs. As you move from determining how to eliminate the State's deficit to considering how best to accelerate Connecticut's economy and grow jobs, we urge you to consider how to help UCHC be an even larger contributor to that effort. We know that bioscience/healthcare is one of the nation's and our State's few growth industries. We also know that Connecticut will need to respond to the increasing demand for quality healthcare as healthcare reform is implemented. The UCHC is positioned to be a critical asset in your strategic efforts to address these economic and healthcare challenges.

We appreciate the value you place in your only public academic medical center and what it can uniquely offer in terms of adding to the quality of life of Connecticut residents now and for the foreseeable future.